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8 November 1950

Dr. Paul H. Buck  
Provost  
Harvard University  
Cambridge, Massachusetts

Dear Dr. Buck:

It is my understanding that with the informal approval of the individual members of the Corporation of Harvard College you granted a leave of absence to Dr. William L. Langer for a period of service to the Central Intelligence Agency.

Aware of Dr. Langer's great importance as an historian and educator and the value of his services to Harvard University, I was most reluctant to exert the pressure which I put upon him to return to intelligence work. However, at this critical time, it is literally impossible to exaggerate the importance of intelligence to the security of this country.

Under these circumstances, I know you will understand my action in pressing Dr. Langer into this service and the depth of my appreciation of his willingness to serve and of Harvard University's permission that he do so.

Would you convey to President Conant the appreciation of the President of the United States for this generous and patriotic action of Harvard University.

With kindest regards,

Sincerely,

/s/ Walter B. Smith

WALTER B. SMITH  
Director

MORI/CDF Page 1

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